

[The Hill](#) newspaper reported on the [letter Chairman Towns sent to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack](#) requesting information on the forced resignation of Shirley Sherrod.

[From the Hill](#) :

The chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee asked Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack for a briefing on the firing of Shirley Sherrod this week.

Rep. Edolphus Towns (D-N.Y.), the chairman of the committee, wrote Vilsack to ask for a briefing about the circumstances that led to Sherrod's firing in a racially charged incident that's drawn national attention.

"It is also important that the department have in place a personnel process that ensures fact-based decision-making and provides all employees with a fair opportunity to provide input into those decisions," Towns wrote.

Sherrod, who is black, was fired by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), reportedly under pressure from Vilsack and the Obama administration, after video emerged suggesting she had deliberately denied assistance to a white farmer in her capacity as a state official in charge of rural farming in Georgia. Complete video later showed that her remarks had been taken out of context, and she was instead telling a story of racial progress.

The emergence of the edited video prompted Vilsack and the White House to apologize publicly on Wednesday and offer Sherrod a job back with the USDA.

"As a result of these developments, I request that Department of Agriculture officials provide a comprehensive briefing to staff of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform as soon as possible regarding this matter," Towns wrote.

Chairman Towns requested that the Department of Agriculture provide the Committee with a detailed response as soon as possible.